

**East Asia and Pacific Summer Institutes
(EAPSI) Program with Australia**

HANDBOOK

**2008 Summer Institute in Australia
For U.S. Graduate Students in
Science and Engineering**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Summer Program in Australia for 2008 is co-sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the US and the Australian Academy of Science (AAS). The program will be held during June 16 (Arrival) - August 12 (Departure), 2008.

The summer program in Australia provides U.S. graduate students (U.S. Citizens or permanent residents) in science and engineering first-hand research experience in Australia, an introduction to the science and science policy infrastructure of Australia, and orientation to the Australian culture. The primary goals of the program are to introduce students to Australian science and engineering in the context of a research laboratory, and to initiate personal relationships that will better enable them to collaborate in the future.

The program is administered in the United States by the National Science Foundation (NSF) (<http://www.nsf.gov>, <http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?org=OISE>) and the Australian Academy of Science (AAS) (<http://www.science.org.au>). The Australian Academy of Science's involvement is possible, thanks to the financial support of the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training. The Academy coordinates the orientation, and also helps participants move to host institutions. The Academy will be the contact point for questions in various issues such as visas, host institutions, travel in Australia, and emergency while the participants are in Australia.

NSF Headquarters Office (Arlington)

Dr. Rick Nader, Program Manager

Dr. Andrew Backe, Program Specialist **(PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT)**

Ms. Arletha Mayfield, Program Assistant

National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Blvd., Suit 935, Arlington, VA 22230, U.S.A.

<http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?org=OISE>

Email: epainfo@nsf.gov ; rnader@nsf.gov ; abacke@nsf.gov ; amayfiel@nsf.gov

Tel: 703-292-8704

Fax: 703-292-9175

AAS

Ms. Nancy Pritchard, Manager

Ms. Charis Tyrrel **(PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT)**

International Programs

Australian Academy of Science

GPO Box 783, Canberra, ACT 2601 AUSTRALIA

URL: <http://www.science.org.au>

Email: is@science.org.au OR charis.tyrrel@science.org.au

Phone: 61-2-6201-9412

Switchboard : 61-2-62019400

Fax: 61-2-6201-9494

Mobile : 0417 286 921 (Nancy Pritchard)

II. PREPARATION

A. Host Institution and Researcher in Australia

You should remember that host researchers or institutions are not paid to host you. Therefore your technical contributions to their program will be most appreciated. Many former Summer Program participants became highly recognized professionals after graduation and continue their relationship with host researchers in many productive ways. A few tips regarding host institutions and research plans are provided below.

1. How to find your host institution and researcher in Australia?

First, you need to talk to your research advisors or colleagues in your home institutions, who are active in the research areas of your interests. Many of them have contacts in Australia. You may also check recent journal papers or conference proceeding papers in the areas of your interests. You can identify Australian institutions and researchers from published papers. The Academy Web site also has a list of some potential host institutions in Australia. If you find any institutions of your interest from the list, you may contact them to identify potential host researchers. If nothing works, contact the Academy staff for assistance in finding your host researcher.

2. What to discuss with your host researcher in Australia?

Eight weeks pass very quickly, and every year participants in the summer program state that they wish they had another week or two to finish their research projects. They expressed that they "wasted" the first part of their stay discussing potential projects and not working on the actual project itself. Therefore you are encouraged to make an effort both to create a research plan and to discuss its viability with your host scientist before you depart to Australia. It is well worth the time and effort.

Research Plan

With your host researcher's agreement, you may choose to continue your on-going research work or you may choose to work on their on-going or new research project. If you choose to work on a new research topic, you may not be able to have tangible results at the end of the eight-week period. To make your visit to Australian productive in research, you may want to do the following:

Join one of the on-going projects in your host researcher's laboratory.
Team up with one of the graduate students in their research group.
Read their publications and understand their methods and approaches.

Decide on the scope and weekly schedule of your work, consulting with your host researcher before you arrive in Australia.

Facilities

After your research plan is made, you should check with the host researcher to confirm that equipment, facilities, or materials required for your research will be available to you during your visit.

Other information

You may get the most useful information about how to survive in the host institution from other U.S. students, research staff, or visiting faculty who are currently there or have been there in the past. You may ask your host researcher to send you contact information about current or previous U.S. researchers in the host institution, if any. You may also ask for information about possible professional visits during your stay (see section B) and housing arrangements (see section F).

B. How to set up other professional visits?

NSF and AAS encourage participants to visit laboratories outside of their host laboratory both to gain a broader understanding of the Australian scientific community in their fields and to create contacts for future research collaboration. Four main resources for developing contacts in Australia are

Your advisor, professors, and colleagues in the United States

Make sure you consult with your department advisor and other appropriate individuals before you leave home and develop a list of researchers you would like to meet while in Australia. Letters of introduction provided by primary advisors to the Australian researchers are extremely useful in setting up research visits as this further solidifies potential research relationships.

Your Australian host scientist

Prior to your arrival, you should inform your host that you are interested in visiting other laboratories in Australia and ask them if they have suggestions as to which researchers would be beneficial for you to meet. If the host responds to this request, you can then politely ask if they would be willing to make the necessary introductions for you.

Publication search

When all else fails, a publication search can help identify Australian researchers within your field. In this case, you might send or fax a polite letter that introduces yourself, explains your research, and requests a visit while you are in Australia.

C. Passport and Visa

You will need a valid passport for travel to Australia. If you do not have a valid U.S. passport, application instructions and forms are available at the State Department Web site: http://travel.state.gov/passport_easy.html. You should apply early (2-3 months before travel). You can request expedited processing with additional fee.

Please note that visa requirements change from time to time due to today's world environment. We strongly recommend that prior to your travel, you contact the Australian Embassy in Washington DC to enquire about visa requirements to enter Australia.

It is the Academy's understanding that you will probably need to obtain a Short Validity Business ETA visa for the 8 weeks that you will participate in the program. You can apply for the Short Validity Business ETA visa at your travel agent or your airline reservation desk, or, alternatively, you can apply on-line at the Australian Immigration Department website: <http://www.eta.immi.gov.au/ETAAus3En.html>

If you are staying in Australia for more than 90 days for visiting purposes you can apply online while you are in Australia to extend your stay.
<https://www.ecom.immi.gov.au/visas/jsp/index.jsp?visaType=VSS>

Please note that if you intend to stay beyond the 90 days to complete your program, you will need to exit and reenter Australia on your Short Validity Business ETA visa. For any other purpose of extension, please refer to your closest DIMA (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) office in Australia. A list is available on http://www.immi.gov.au/contacts/aust_index.htm

D. International Air Travel

The NSF-contracted travel agency, SATO Travel, will provide each participant with a round-trip economy class ticket between the major airport nearest their U.S. city of residence and Sydney, Australia. Participants will be advised by e-mail when and how to contact SATO Travel to make travel international reservations.

DO NOT PURCHASE ANY TICKETS ON YOUR OWN; NSF WILL NOT BE ABLE TO REIMBURSE YOU.

There are important Federal Government and NSF travel guidelines and restrictions:

Tickets are government-purchased and issued on U.S. carriers according to the Fly America Act: <http://www.tvlon.com/resources/FlyAct.html>

Tickets will be issued at non-restricted, federal government fares. Travelers are typically authorized to travel round-trip from their domicile (permanent home address or academic institution) to Australia only.

Tickets will be issued electronically (e-tickets) approximately three (3) days prior to departure.

There are designated contract carriers for the U.S. government for specific cities and routes, and SATO Travel is required to issue tickets through the designated airlines, if possible. Do not expect SATO travel to enter "frequent flyer" numbers or any other services.

Please notify the Academy of Science of your flight schedule so that they can arrange your air travel to Canberra on Monday, June 16, 2008.

E. Stipend

NSF's US\$5,000 Stipend

An official NSF award letter will be issued to you by the Division of Grants and Agreements. The award notification will include instructions about how to request electronic transfer of the \$5,000 stipend. Additionally, students who attend the pre-departure orientation will be reimbursed the costs of attending through their awards.

Questions concerning tax liabilities **cannot** be answered by NSF and should be directed to the Internal Revenue Service.

As a recipient of the \$5,000, you must make sure you will not be “double-funded” from NSF or other federal sources. This restriction applies to ANY federal source. Consult with your advisor and your fellowship coordinator or contact NSF to verify. For example, if you are a recipient of an NSF-sponsored Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) award, you should consult with your university's Coordinating Official (CO) for the Graduate Research Fellowship and your advisor about whether or not to accept the GRF stipend or the EAPSI stipend. If you decide to continue to receive a non-EAPSI federal stipend during the Summer Institute period (the typical case), then you will be issued a zero dollar NSF Summer Institute award (i.e., you will not receive the EAPSI stipend). However, you will still receive the airline ticket through the Summer Institute program and in-country living expenses from the counterpart science agency.

Living Allowance in Australia

AU\$3,000 of living allowance and insurance fee for each participant will be provided by the Academy. During the orientation period you will receive your living allowances. You will be responsible for paying for lodging and meals in your host institution, transportation, and incidental expenses. Travel to your host will be covered by AAS.

You need to bring at least U.S. \$500 to cover incidental (and any unexpected) expenses until you receive the Academy stipend. You are advised to exchange at least U.S. \$200 to Australian Dollars at the Sydney Airport.

F. Housing Arrangements

You should ask your host scientist in advance for detailed information about housing facilities and arrangements in the host institution, such as international lodging or dormitories. You must note that some institutions may not have enough housing facilities. You must make payments for the lodging at your host institution according to their rules and procedure.

If you will make your own housing arrangement other than the lodging facilities at the host institution, you need to notify your host institution as soon as possible.

During the orientation period, you will stay at the dormitory of the Australian National University in Canberra.

G. Insurance

If you do not already have medical insurance that will cover you internationally, you are required to purchase the insurance arranged by the Academy. The insurance will cover doctor's charges, including in hospital, hospital expenses, pharmaceutical costs and emergency ambulance costs. It is possible to get extra coverage that includes dental services, physiotherapy and more. The insurance does not cover pre-existing conditions. Details of the insurance coverage and claims procedure will be provided during the orientation period. The insurance premium (approx. AU\$160) will be deducted from your Academy's stipend.

H. Health and Safety

For your general health, consider the following, as appropriate:

If you wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses with you for backup. You may also wish to bring a copy of your corrective lens prescription in the event you must have glasses made. Don't count on finding your specific brands of eye care products overseas--take them with you.

If you take prescription medications regularly, and will be traveling with prescription drugs, bring a signed script or letter from your physician indicating your medical need(s) for the drug(s) and identify the drug(s) you will possess while traveling. If you require insulin and syringes, or have allergies and require epinephrine pens, you should look into the requirements for international travel with these paraphernalia.

Please consult your personal health care provider about your trip (destination and time abroad). Ask your health provider to review your vaccination record and any other medical needs you might have. You should do this at least 4-6 weeks prior to departure.

The U.S. Government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintain a traveler's Web site with health information and travel advisories; the URL is <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

Please review travel safety information and guidelines can be accessed at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

A comprehensive set of tips is available at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>.

You are also encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Australia at: <http://usembassy-australia.state.gov/embassy/>

III. TRAVEL AND LOGISTICS

A. Arrival on June 16, 2008

All the participants in the Summer Institute are expected to arrive at Sydney's International Airport on June 16, 2008 and stay for the entire duration of the SI. After clearing immigration and customs at the international airport, you will need to make your way to the domestic terminal to board your flight to Canberra. Sydney airport has good signage indicating how you get to the QANTAS airline counter. You will need to check in your bags and board the free bus that will take you to the domestic airport (about 10 minutes ride). Please note that Academy staff will meet you at the arrival lobby of Canberra Airport and escort you to your accommodation. For those participants who will be traveling to Australia prior to the start of the Program, please contact Charis Tyrrel at AAS and advise Dr. Andrew Backe at NSF.

B. Day to Day Schedule

On June 16, you will fly to Canberra where you will stay for the Orientation Program.

The Academy will provide day-to-day logistic support during the Orientation. The Orientation Program will be held in the Academy.

The Summer Program schedule is summarized as follows:

Monday June 16: Arrival in Australia – travel to Canberra.

June 16 – 18: Opening and Orientation session in Canberra.

June 19: Travel to host institutions

June 20– August 11: Research experience at host institutions

August 12: Departure from Australia

IV. COMMUNICATING AND REPORTING

It is important to keep all the coordinating agencies abreast of changes in your plans. Please email the following KEY PERSONS should you have problems or have questions:

Dr. Andrew Backe, NSF abacke@nsf.gov

Ms. Charis Tyrrel, AAS is@science.org.au ; charis.tyrrel@science.org.au

Your host and your U.S. advisor

AAS Report

All participants are requested to submit a report on research work carried out during the program. The forms will be distributed during the orientation period. Reports should be written on A4 size paper by 1 September 2008.

NSF Report

Participants are required to submit a Final Report to the NSF East Asia and Pacific Program of NSF via the Fast lane system no later than **December 1, 2008**.

V. OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

1. The fellowship will not be given to the participants if:
 - (a) a false statement is found in the application documents.
 - (b) an applicant's participation is cancelled by the host location.

2. You are strongly encouraged to keep your host researchers/advisors advised of progress in your application status and build mutual expectations about your research plan.

Other useful information can be obtained from the following web sites:

Australian Academy of Science homepage: <http://www.science.org.au>

Australian Consulates in U.S.A.:

Australia Consulate General in New York <http://www.australianyc.org/>

Australian Consulate General in Los Angeles

<http://www.austemb.org/Consulates/LosAngeles.htm>

NSF EAPSI Program: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5284